

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

shot a single specimen of this species in November 1893, at Majali, five miles north of Karwar (14°50'N) and since then, the species has never been recorded anywhere in Karnata-

taka. In view of the above, our present sighting of this bird in Karnataka after a gap of over nine decades happens to be the recent and the southernmost record for the species.

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17. AN INTERESTING FEEDING BEHAVIOUR OF THE
WHITECHEEKED NUTHATCH (*SITTA LEUCOPSIS*)

In May-June 1985 I stayed in Overa Wildlife sanctuary near Pahalgam, Kashmir, to study the genus *Phylloscopus* (leaf warblers) with Dr. T. D. Price. On 16th May I visited Kanjkut, an open meadow surrounded by coniferous forest. At this place coniferous forest ends and gives way to silver birch. Here I found 3 pairs of the Whitecheeked Nuthatch (*Sitta leucopsis*), frequenting dry and bare coniferous trees. The birds were very noisy calling with their distinctive, loud nasal calls. I spent an hour watching them and to my surprise they all fed by flycatching, in the manner of the Sooty flycatcher (*Muscicapa sibirica*), fluttering out to hawk insects. The birds were flying clumsily, straight towards the insect sometimes as far as 60 ft and returning to almost the same perch. The birds called loudly while in flight and also when at rest.

Courtship feeding was observed twice. The nuthatch predominantly fed in the fly-catcher manner, and their normal method of creeping amongst the branches was rarely noticed. All the birds frequently perched cross-wise on the branches.

Later, in the first week of June, we moved our camp in this locality, and then also I observed this behaviour often. The common factors in all these observations were; strong sunlight and dry coniferous trees in the open. The nuthatches were also common in forest at lower elevations but I never noticed this behaviour there.

This flycatcher-like feeding habit does not seem to have been recorded for the Whitecheeked nuthatch and possibly not for any other species of nuthatch within Indian limits, and is worth placing on record.

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